

Lowell Tobacco Control Report

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Lowell

Inspections

So far, I have completed 28 in-store inspections this month. I found that the most frequent violations related to the several new requirements of the state law. They were all corrected before I left the premises. I still find an occasional flavored tobacco product. Understandably, retailers are still confused by the many requirements of the new law.

Pricing Surveys

The Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program (MTCP) is creating a smaller sample of establishments that could be surveyed. It is also developing a shorter form to ensure that the time spent in store is not increased significantly. However, surveys are still optional during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has not changed.

Implementation of the new state law: An Act Modernizing Tobacco Control

In order to address the issues I have been encountering during store visits, I have mailed out a letter clarifying and emphasizing important elements of the new law. Since we are entering the tobacco permit renewal season, I have also updated the permit application to include an acknowledgements page. This page includes the major elements of the new law, which the applicant needs to acknowledge by initialing each statement.

Compliance Checks

Given the significant increase in the number of COVID-19 cases across the state, particularly in Lowell and Lawrence, it is uncertain when we will be resuming compliance checks.

Tobacco Permit Renewal

Renewal permit application packages went out on 11/23/20. Like last year, I am hoping to have all applications processed and permits issued before Christmas.

Leading With Race

Continuing with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's theme, *Leading With Race*, I attended another MTCP-sponsored virtual training on structural racism on 11/18/20.